Based on inputs received from the online survey of May-June, 2003, TRAHhas undertaken further technical study to identify the bottlenecks in order to improve the quality of Internet services. For this purpose, TRAI has asked for Internet related traffic details from the Basic Service Operators and Internet Service Providers.

Invitation from Mauritius for Investment

*258. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Mauritius has invited Indian companies to invest in that country and use it as a base for trade with Africa, America and European Union;

(b) whether Mauritius also expects support from India in the form of technical assistance and investment for it's IT industry;

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(d) the steps being taken to meet their demand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) and (b) Yes.

(c) and (d) Both countries have agreed, as part of efforts to promote trade and investment, to explore the possibility of concluding a comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement, which would eventually lead to a Free Trade Agreement between India and Mauritius. The Government of India is also assisting Mauritius in the IT sector and has extended a US$ 100 million line of credit to help establish a Cyber City in Mauritius.

Labour unrest in tea gardens of Assam

*259. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the labour unrest in tea gardens of Assam on 20 per cent bonus issue;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps Government have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government of Assam have informed that instructions have been issued to the enforcement machinery looking after the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965, for timely statutory intervention as and when labour disputes in tea gardens on bonus issues come to their notice.

In the 55th Session of the State level Standing Committee for Plantation Workers held on 30th July '03, the bonus issue was discussed as one of the agenda items. The employers were requested to make the audited balance sheet available to the State Government by 31 st August '03 so as to enable them to do the needful. The State Government of Assam has also constituted a high level Bonus Committee for hearing and quick disposal of bonus disputes.

Wage disparity

†*260. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that equal pay is not given for equal work to the female workers;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether any action has been taken against the persons contravening the law of equal pay for equal work;

(d) if so, the details thereof for the last three years, State-wise; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 which extends to the whole of India, provides for equal remuneration to women for the same work or work of a similar nature.

(c) to (e) Action can be initiated under the above Act in all cases where the law as laid down in Act is violated. In the Central sphere the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.